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ABSTRACT

This educators' guide deals with preparation for and a visit to the historic location of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield (Republic, Missouri), the site of the struggle on August 10, 1861, between Union and Confederate forces for control of Missouri. The guide contains the following materials: Educational Group Reservation Form; Educational Materials Request Form; "The Battle: A Brief Account of the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Its Significance, and the Civil War in Missouri"; Selected Bibliographies (Battle of Wilson's Creek--22 items; Greene County in the Beginning--20 items); Publications (books about the battle and related subjects available for purchase at Wilson's Creek); Related Organizations (a list and description of local facilities with more information regarding the area, the battle, and the Civil War); and Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Official Map and Guide. (BT)

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WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

ED 440 000

EDUCATORS' GUIDE TO

THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK

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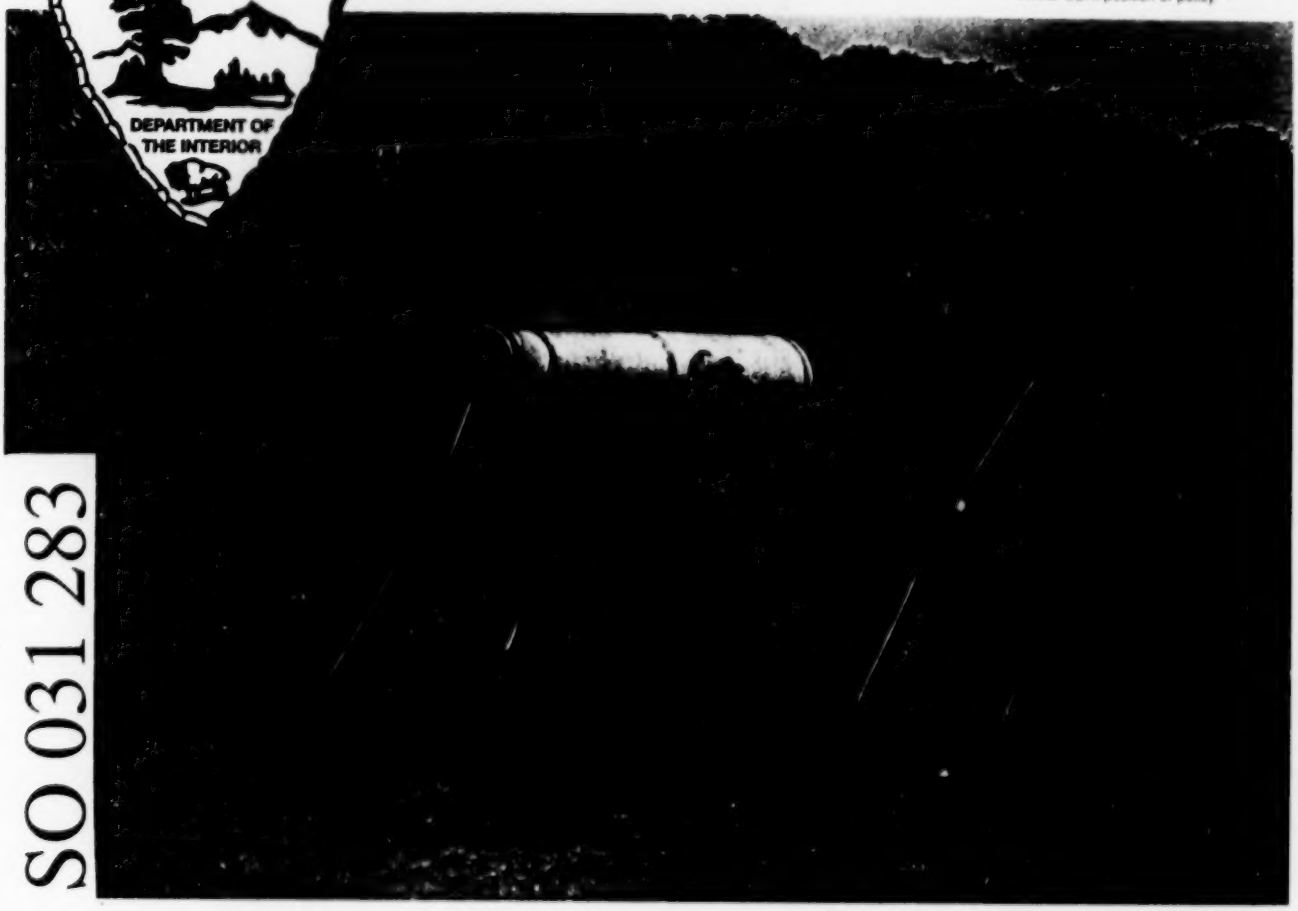

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EDUCATORS' GUIDE TO

THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK

AUGUST 10, 1861

WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM
THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in educational materials at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. This guide is designed to provide you with the necessary introductory materials so that you and your students can make the most of your study of and, if time permits, your visit to the battlefield. Please ask about our other educational packets developed specifically for use with elementary, junior high, and high school students. Please feel free to copy information from any of these packets for use in your classroom. Also see our packets for information on how you may acquire other park materials such as travelling trunks, videos, and more. Should you have further questions and/or concerns, please call us at (417) 732-2662, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M.

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Both the first edition and a revised second edition of this guide were prepared and funded by the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation in 1982-83 and 1987.

This revised third edition of the Educators' Guide was funded by the National Park Foundation and prepared by Kenneth Elkins, Jeff Patrick, and the staff of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

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- SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHIES:
  A. The Battle of Wilson's Creek, August 10, 1861. Covers Lyon's campaign in 1861, the battle, and the balance of the Civil War in Missouri.

  B. Greene County in the Beginning. Covers the settlement of Greene County, its development, and antebellum life in this county and the Ozarks in general.
- PUBLICATIONS:
  Books on the Battle of Wilson's Creek and related subjects available for purchase at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.
- RELATED ORGANIZATIONS:
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- WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD: OFFICIAL MAP AND GUIDE

EDUCATIONAL GROUP RESERVATION FORM

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield
6424 W. Farm Road 182
Republic, Missouri 65738
(417) 732-2662

Date of reservation request: _____ Reservation received by: _____

Name of teacher: _____

Name of school: _____

Address of school: _____

_____

Phone number of school: _____

CONFIRMATION FOR VISIT TO WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Grade(s): _____ # of Students: _____ # of Adults: _____

Picnic Area: Yes No Self-guided Auto Tour: Yes No

Special Needs: _____

_____

VISIT GUIDELINES:

* The teacher(s) is(are) responsible for the conduct of their students and must remain with their students during their visit.
* The school will provide one adult for each ten students.
* The entrance fee is waived for educational groups. Please see below.
* If you need to reschedule or cancel your visit, please contact the battlefield as soon as possible.
* If you are interested in reserving a video, a grade-specific educational packet, or one of our travelling trunks before your visit to Wilson's Creek, please use the following Educational Materials Request Form.
* The staff at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield is looking forward to your upcoming visit. We hope that it will be a most enjoyable and educational experience.

I have read the program guidelines listed above and agree to comply with these standards during our visit. I also request a waiver of the entrance fee for my group, as our visit to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield is educational in nature.

_____ _____

Signature Date

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS REQUEST FORM

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield
6424 W. Farm Road 182
Republic, Mo. 65738
(417) 732-2662

Date needed: _____

Teacher's name: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

_____

School phone no.: _____

VIDEOS

____ *Wilson's Creek: The Struggle for Missouri Begins.* A 45 minute narrative of the Battle of Wilson's Creek using footage from the 1991 Wilson's Creek reenactment.

____ *The Common Soldier.* A 40 minute video explaining the weapons, equipment, and lifestyle of the Civil War soldier.

____ *A Mighty Mean Fowt Fight.* A 13 minute video explaining the situation in Missouri before, during and after the battle at Wilson's Creek. (NOTE: This is the video your students will see if you visit the park on a field trip.)

Due to a limited supply of videos, please select only one per school. Thank you.

Please return the video within two weeks or at the time of your visit, whichever is shorter, so that other schools may also use them prior to their visits.

EDUCATIONAL PACKETS

____ *Common Soldier, Common Man* An educational activity packet for grades 1-6.

____ *No Easy Choices: Taking Sides in Civil War Missouri.* An educational activity packet for grades 7-8.

____ *Hard Times, Hard War.* An educational activity packet for grades 9-12.

TRAVELLING TRUNKS

Union and Confederate common soldier trunks are available.
Please schedule them by calling (417) 732-2662.

THE BATTLE

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK, ITS SIGNIFICANCE, AND THE CIVIL WAR IN MISSOURI

By Kenneth Elkins

On the cold, clear night of February 7, 1861, Captain Nathaniel Lyon led his company of U.S. infantrymen from Fort Riley, Kansas, off railroad cars at Union Depot in St. Louis, Missouri and marched them to the Federal Arsenal, which local Unionists feared might fall under the control of Southern sympathizers. Just two months later the first shots of the American Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter in South Carolina and almost four months after that Lyon, with only three months experience as a newly appointed general, and hundreds of other men, were killed in a brutal battle along Wilson's Creek in southwest Missouri on a scorching morning in August. While Lyon undoubtedly was "an obscure infantry captain" before the war began, perhaps as much as any other man, he was responsible for bringing the war to Missouri. Unfortunately, the struggle for Missouri did not end with the deaths at Wilson's Creek. By war's end, Missouri not only had seen more military actions than any other state except Virginia and Tennessee, but Missourians had also endured a bitter guerrilla struggle that cost over 25,000 civilian lives.

Just before Wilson's Creek President Abraham Lincoln instructed Major General John Fremont, before he assumed overall command of Union forces in the West in late July, that "you must use your own judgement, and do the best you can." Fremont considered possession of Missouri a key part of controlling the Mississippi River Valley, which would allow the Union to "hold the country by its heart." In other words, according to the historian Shelby Foote, while "Missouri was only a starting point," it was "essential to the plan" to control the Mississippi River to the Gulf, including the vital cities of Vicksburg and New Orleans. Further, beyond the need to protect Missouri's Unionists, the state was important to the Union because of the manpower and agricultural produce it could contribute to the war effort, as well as serving as a potential staging point for a later invasion of the South. Finally, Missouri was crucial because by 1860 it supplied over 60% of the nation's lead. Later, after the Battle of Wilson's Creek, G. W. Clark, the Confederate Quartermaster at Fort Smith, Arkansas informed Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin that he believed that lead mines in southern Missouri could "furnish all that is wanted for the Confederate Army." Aside from these logical reasons for securing control of Missouri, Lyon's fanatical devotion to preserving the Union drove him to purge the state of those who were not of like mind.

From the time of his arrival in St. Louis, Lyon showed little interest in compromising with anyone who held Southern sympathies. In the weeks before the battle at Wilson's Creek, he had the weapons in the St. Louis Arsenal moved to a safe place, took prisoner hundreds of pro-secession Missouri militiamen gathered nearby at Camp Jackson, seized control of the capital in Jefferson City, refused to negotiate with pro-Southern leaders such as Missouri Governor Claiborne Jackson, routed Rebel forces at Boonville, Missouri's first battle, in mid-June, and then pursued them into southwest Missouri in mid-July. There, after more hard marching and inconclusive skirmishes, Lyon decided for three reasons to attack the Southern force camped on Wilson's Creek: nearly half of his men were at the end of their ninety day enlistments; to protect a pro-Union element in Springfield recently swollen by refugees; and simply because it galled him to retreat without doing any serious damage to the Rebel cause in Missouri. Ironically, Southern leaders planned to march on Springfield the evening before but a local thunder shower forced them to remain in camp, though they failed to set adequate sentries. On the morning of August 10th, a Saturday, he attacked the Southern camps on Wilson's Creek from the north with 4200 troops while Colonel Franz Sigel's 1200 men struck from the south. By dividing his small force Lyon hoped to surprise the larger Southern army, damage it seriously, and drive it off before its leaders could bring their 12,000 men to bear on the attacking Federals. If it had not been for the murderous delaying fire of Captain William Woodruff's Confederate artillery battery at the outset of the battle and then Sigel's disastrous rout at 8:30 A.M. at the hands of Southern troops mistaken for gray-clad Iowans, Lyon might have succeeded. But the Confederate and Missouri State Guard forces under the leadership, respectively, of Generals Ben McCulloch and

under the leadership, respectively, of Generals Ben McCulloch and Sterling Price, refused to yield and, with Sigel's troops gone from the field, Lyon's men faced their enemies alone.

Though few of the troops on either side had seen full-scale combat, the two armies stood, with the glaring exception of Sigel's rout, in the worst of conditions and fought at close quarters on both sides of Wilson's Creek. The roar of battle was heard miles away, while on the high ground west of the creek, thereafter known as Bloody Hill, clouds of gunpowder smoke shrouded the wounded and the dead strewn across a devastated landscape. Lost in the searing sights and sounds of war, the two armies faced off in the merciless heat for what must have seemed like an eternity, though the battle actually lasted less than six hours and was broken by three clear lulls. One Union officer recalled that by 9:00 A.M. the "engagement . . . [became] almost inconceivably fierce along the entire line." While rallying his troops to meet this determined Southern assault, General Lyon, already twice wounded, died when a bullet found his heart, though few were aware of his loss.

During the two hours after Lyon's death at 9:30, according to Major Samuel Sturgis, the senior Union officer, the "most bloody engagement of the day" occurred, during which the Federal line held "with perfect firmness" despite "the contending lines being almost muzzle to muzzle." By noon, Sturgis, who did not assume command of Union forces for nearly a half hour after Lyon's death because of the poor communications and confusion so common to the warfare of that day, ordered his exhausted troops to retreat after their ammunition ran low, leaving the field to the equally exhausted Rebels who, upon attacking for the fourth time, found only the wounded and the dead on Bloody Hill.

Despite their inexperience and the miserable conditions in which they strove, the opposing armies, with but a few exceptions, fought well. General John Clark, a division commander in the Missouri State Guard, exclaimed the morning after the battle while surrounded by the awful debris of war, "But didn't my men fight, though? Didn't they fight like devils?" Such sentiments were common on both sides. Edwin Nash, adjutant for the 1st Kansas Regiment, in a letter informing Mrs. Hattie Jones of the death of her husband, First Lieutenant Levant Jones, wrote that "while our boys were being cut down by the dozens they never flinched a hair but stood their ground like old veterans." Sadly, in the course of such brave efforts, both veterans and the inexperienced suffered and died in the indiscriminate slaughter of the battle.

So ferocious was the fighting at Wilson's Creek, it is little wonder the casualty rates were so high. Over 530 men were killed during the battle while more than 1800 were wounded, many of them severely. Henry Martyn Cheavens, an infantryman with the Missouri State Guard, was struck by Federal artillery fire during the battle. A canister ball nearly severed the muscles and nerves in his right thigh while breaking the bone just above the knee. Though a friend endured two amputations and suffered "immensely" before dying six weeks later, inexplicably Cheavens avoided the same surgery that too often resulted in deadly infections. Later he wrote that "maggots crawled over me and in my wound and up my back till the bedclothes were just filled." Though Cheavens and others survived their wounds, too many men went unattended for hours after the battle only to die alone. But after the battle there would be little time to grieve for the dead or reflect on the fate of the wounded because the machinery of war had been set in relentless motion and would grind on for nearly four more years.

Southern forces at Wilson's Creek failed to take advantage of their hard-won victory and strike the Federal forces before they retreated to Rolla and then St. Louis. Soon thereafter, while regular Confederate forces under General McCulloch returned to Arkansas, General Price led the Missouri State Guard north where, in mid-September, they captured and temporarily held the small community of Lexington on the Missouri River before retreating to the south. Thus, in the long run, Lyon's gamble at Wilson's Creek paid off; Southern forces were prevented from gaining control of major portions of Missouri in 1861 and the stage was set for the Union's decisive victory at Pea Ridge in northern Arkansas the next spring. Meanwhile, many of the men who fought at Wilson's Creek went on to fight in hundreds of other battles during the war, many of which would prove to be much like the one at Wilson's Creek: bitterly contested, costly, and too often inconclusive. Finally, and beyond the consequences of regular military actions, Missourians faced almost four more years of grim guerrilla warfare during which marauding bands from both sides killed thousands of civilians and drove many others from their homes and farms. The legacies of that guerrilla warfare, as well as our memories of the men on both sides who fought valiantly in the bloody battle at Wilson's Creek, still remain with us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK, AUGUST 10, 1861

The following is a partial list of books, articles, and other materials about the Battle of Wilson's Creek which are available at the Springfield-Greene County Public Library or at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. For further sources, please see the bibliographies in the three grade-appropriate educational packets. Please note that those works listed below that are comprised of largely primary sources are marked with the prefix "*".

The Battle of Wilson's Creek, August 10, 1861. Souvenir Edition. N.A. Wilson's Creek Centennial, 1961.

Bearss, Edwin C. *The Battle of Wilson's Creek. Fourth edition.* Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation, 1992.

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GREENE COUNTY IN THE BEGINNING

These titles were selected as being representative of the social and political climate of Greene County at the time of settlement as well as during its early development. Some are entirely devoted to Greene County while others reflect the Ozarks region in general. All of the materials are available at the Springfield-Greene County Public Library. Please note that those works listed below that are comprised largely of primary sources are marked with the prefix "*".

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Upton, Lucile Morris. *"How Springfield was Named."* Springfield Magazine, June, 1980.

Wetmore, Alphonso. *Gazeteer of the State of Missouri.* New York: Mid-America Frontier, 1975.

PUBLICATIONS

WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD
ABRIDGED SALES LIST

Please note that those works listed below which are comprised largely of primary sources are marked with the prefix "*".

**An Account of the Battle of Wilson's Creek*, by Holcombe and Adams (Originally printed in 1883, reprinted in 1961 and 1985 by the Springfield Public Library and the Greene County Historical Society), PB	$4.50
American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War, by Bruce Catton, 1960, 1988, HB	$25.00
Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era, by James McPherson, 1988, 1989, PB	$16.95
The Battle of Wilson's Creek, by Edwin Bearss (4th ed. published by Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation, 1992), PB	$4.75
Battle in the Civil War: Generalship and Tactics in America, 1861-65, by Paddy Griffith, 1986, PB	$14.95
**Battles and Leaders, Vols. I, II, III, IV*, edited by Clarence Buel, (reprint of 1887 edition), HB	$13.00/ea
Ben McCulloch and the Frontier Military Tradition, byThomas Cutrer, 1993, HB	$34.95
Bloody Hill: The Civil War Battle of Wilson's Creek, by William Brooksher, 1995, HB	$24.95
Bloody Hill Walking Guide, by Kenneth Elkins, 1991, PB	$.50
Blue and Gray, The (Book Set), by Thomas B. Allen, 1992, HB	$29.95
**Blue and Gray Cookery: Authentic Recipes from the Civil War Years*, by Hugh and Judy Gowan, 1980, PB	$3.00
Borderland Rebellion: A History of the Civil War on the Missouri-Arkansas Border, by Elmo Ingenthron, 1980, PB	$14.95
Cannons: An Introduction to Civil War Artillery, by Dean Thomas, 1985, PB	$5.95
Carthage in the Civil War, by Steve Cottrell, 1990, PB	$3.00
The Civil War, by Bruce Catton, American Heritage Library, 1987, (same text as Picture History but fewer illustrations and descriptive materials), PB	$12.95
The Civil War Battlefield Guide, edited by Frances Kennedy, 1990, PB	$16.95 HB $29.95
Civil War Parks, by William C. Davis, 1992, PB	$6.95

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The Civil War Dictionary, Revised Edition, by Mark Boatner III, 1959, 1988, HB	$29.95
**Civil War Medical Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, by Dr. Gordon Dammann, 1983, PB	$7.95
**Civil War Medical Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, by Dr. Gordon Dammann, 1988, PB	$8.95
Civil War in the Indian Territory, by Steve Cottrell, 1995, PB	$8.95
Civil War in the Ozarks, by Phillip W. Steele and Steve Cottrell, 1994, PB	$8.95
Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865, by Jay Monaghan, 1955, 1984, PB	$11.95
Civil War, The by Ken Burns, 1990, PB	$30.00
Civil War, The - Vols. I, II, III, by Shelby Foote, 1963, 1986, PB	$24.00
Confederate Arkansas, by Michael Dougan, 1976, PB	$14.50
Damned Yankee: The Life of General Nathaniel Lyon, by Christopher Phillips, 1990, HB	$26.00
Down the Wire Road, by Fern Angus, 1992, PB	$10.95
Father John B. Bannon: The Confederacy's Fighting Chaplain, by Phillip Thomas Tucker, 1992, HB	$32.95
Flags of the Confederacy, by Devereaux Cannon, 1988, PB	$9.95
Frontier State At War: Kansas, 1861-65, by Albert Castel, 1958, 1992, PB	$15.95
General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West,by Albert Castel, 1968, 1993, PB	$14.95
Golden Book of the Civil War, by Charles Hato, 1976, (adapted from Bruce Catton's *Picture History* for young readers), PB	$14.95
In Deadly Earnest: The Missouri Brigade, by Phil Gottschalk, 1991, HB	$29.95
Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict In Missouri During the Civil War, by Michael Fellman, 1989, PB	$11.95
An Introduction to Civil War Small Arms, by Earl J. Coates and Dean S. Thomas, 1990, PB	$7.95
**Kansans At Wilson's Creek: Soldiers' Letters from the Campaign for Southwest Missouri*, edited by Richard W. Hatcher III and William Garrett Piston, 1993, PB	$5.00
**Life in the Confederate Army*, by William Watson, 1995, (reprint of 1887 edition), PB	$16.95
**The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*, by Bell Wiley, 1952, 1994, PB	$11.95
**The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy*, by Bell Wiley, 1943, 1995, PB	$11.95

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* *The Lyon Campaign and History of the 1st Iowa Infantry*, by Eugene Ware, 1991, (reprint of 1907 edition), HB	$24.95
Nathaniel Lyon, Harbinger from Kansas, by Scott Price, 1990, PB	$5.00
Official Atlas of the War of the Rebellion, 1983, (reprint of 1891-95 edition), HB	$60.00
Pea Ridge: Civil War Campaign in the West, by William Shea and Earl Hess, 1992, HB	$29.95
Ray House, The, by August Klapp, PB	$1.75
Rugged and Sublime: The Civil War in Arkansas, edited by Mark Christ, 1994, PB	$14.00
Shelby And His Men, by John N. Edwards, (reprint of 1867 edition), HB	$35.00
Soldiers - Blue and Gray, by James Robertson, 1988, PB	$12.95
War on the Frontier, by Alvin M. Josephy, 1986, HB	$18.95
West Point and Wilson's Creek, by John K. Hulston, 1991, PB	$2.00
* *With the Light Guns*, by W.E. Woodruff, (reprint of 1903 edition), HB	$25.00
* *Yankee Dutchman: The Life of Franz Sigel*, by Stephen Engle, 1993, HB	$36.00
Leslie's Illustrated (reprint of 8/24/61 newspaper)	$1.00
Sterling Price Print	$3.50
* Postcards (scenes of battlefield, participants, etc.)	$.25
Color Slide Set of Wilson's Creek (4)	$1.25
Battlefields of the Civil War (Map)	$9.95
Civil War at a Glance (Map)	$1.00
Civil War in the Ozarks (Map)	$7.50
Wilson's Creek: The Struggle for Missouri Begins (video)	$24.95

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2. Postage and Handling Fee - 1 book - $3.00
   - 2 books - $5.50

   For larger mail orders please call the Eastern National Bookstore at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield (417-732-2662) for correct postage and handling.

3. Please make checks or money orders payable to ENP&MA.

4. Call or write for an expanded sales list.

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RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations provide different types of information and services for those interested in various aspects of the American Civil War.

1. General Sweeny's: A Museum of Civil War History

5228 South State Highway ZZ • Republic, MO 65738 • ph. (417) 732-1224.
This museum traces the war in the Trans-Mississippi West through fifty different professionally designed displays drawn from over 5,000 artifacts. It covers the period from "Bleeding Kansas" in the 1850s to the surrender of Confederate General Stand Watie in June, 1865.

2. Greene County Archives

1126 Boonville • Springfield, MO 65802 • ph. (417) 868-4021
These archives provide access to the official records of Greene County from 1833 to the present, including records of civil and criminal court cases, probate court records, tax records, and similar materials.

3. Greene County Historical Society

P.O. Box 3466, Glenstone Station • Springfield, MO 65808 • ph. (417) 881-6147
A group concerned with the promotion and dissemination of information pertaining to Greene County history. Please write for more information.

4. The History Museum for Springfield-Greene County

City Hall Building, Third Floor, 830 Boonville • Springfield, MO 65802 • ph. (417) 864-1976
This museum provides permanent and rotating exhibits on local history in Springfield and Greene County. In addition, its archives are open to the public and contain thousands of historical books, documents, and photographs.

5. Ozarks Genealogical Society Library

534 West Catalpa • Springfield, MO 65807 • ph. (417) 831-2773
This facility houses and provides public access to genealogical materials for southwest Missouri. Please write for free brochure and information.

6. Shepard Room, Main Branch Springfield-Greene County Public Library

397 East Central • Springfield, MO 65802 • ph. (417) 837-5000
The Shepard Room is the local history and genealogical center for the Springfield-Greene County library system. It has information on Springfield, Greene County, the Ozarks, and Missouri history. It also has material of interest to Civil War enthusiasts, including information from the National Archives, official records, and more.

7. Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation

P.O. Box 8163 • Springfield, MO 65801 • ph. (417) 881-4387
In cooperation with the National Park Service and Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, the foundation seeks through a variety of means to encourage the full educational utilization and development of the cultural resources of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

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